



News Release

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC SECURITY
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CPS STATEMENT CLARIFYING ITS INVOLVEMENT WITH CHRISTOPHER M. PAYNE

Child Protective Services shares the Tucson community's grief at the death of one child and the disappearance of another. We are providing any information we have that might assist investigators and prosecutors in their efforts to hold accountable the person(s) responsible for harming these children.

CPS information has not been shared with the public up to this point in order to safeguard the integrity of the police investigation and the criminal prosecution. Because some information related to CPS' involvement with Christopher Payne was made public during a Tucson Police Department press conference, we are providing the following limited information in order to clarify our actions:

The role of CPS is to investigate reports of abuse or neglect; provide services and supports to strengthen families, where possible; and, where this is not possible, to find the child(ren) another safe, permanent home.

- Prior to his arrest, CPS had received no reports alleging that Christopher Payne had abused or neglected his children. We had received allegations that the children had been neglected by another individual, and our investigation of those allegations included contact with Mr. Payne.
- CPS did not place the children with Mr. Payne. The children were placed with Mr. Payne by another individual family member, and our investigation revealed no information that the children were at risk of harm with him.
- CPS did not award custody of the children to Mr. Payne. Parental custody is awarded by a Family Relations Court. In working with families, CPS does provide information to parents about the process of getting or changing custody orders. If requested by law enforcement or the court, we will share any case information that we have, including custody arrangements, risk issues, etc. Yesterday's press conference referenced a call to police one year ago related to custody of the children and concerns about their safety. TPD responded. Neither TPD nor CPS had information at that time that indicated the children would not be safe with Mr. Payne.

We will continue to work with the Tucson Police Department and our staff to ensure that the necessary collaboration continues to occur in this investigation.